

# Memorandum

**Date:** July 3, 2001

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**To :** Arthur H. Rosenfeld, Presiding Member  
Michal C. Moore, Associate Member

**From :** California Energy Commission - Lance Shaw  
1516 Ninth Street Energy Commission Project Manager  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

**Subject :** RIO LINDA/ELVERTA POWER PROJECT (01-AFC-1)  
STATUS REPORT #1

## Information Hearing / Site Visit

The information hearing and site visit held on May 16, 2001, provided staff and the public the opportunity to hear the applicant's description of the project and to view the site. The proposed plant site, the Western Area Power Administration (Western) substation where the plant's output power will connect, and the proposed wells for water supply were pointed during the site visit.

Staff had arranged for a more extended site visit on the following day. On this trip, much of the natural gas connecting pipeline was viewed. There are still parts of the pipeline where the applicant does not have access, nor filed cultural survey information. On this extended site visit, the applicant also showed some of the approximately 3.4 miles of Sacramento Municipal Utility District's (SMUD) Hedge-Proctor transmission line that will need to be reconducted for this project.

## Data Requests

Staff issued 91 data requests of the applicant, FPL Energy Sacramento Power LLC (FPLESP) on May 15, 2001. Requests included the topics of biological, cultural, and geological resources; hazardous materials management; land use; noise; power plant reliability; traffic and transportation; transmission visual resources; and water and soil. A data request workshop was conducted on May 17, 2001, in Rio Linda, at the Rio Linda Community United Methodist Church.

## Planned Workshops

The applicant's data responses were received on June 18, 2001. Some data requests have not been addressed and others are incomplete. At this time, staff does not have a date from the applicant when the remaining responses will be received.

A workshop to address the data responses and issues is being scheduled for July 17, 2001, at the Rio Linda & Elverta Park District, Community Center. The notice, when issued will be sent to the appropriate mailing lists and posted on the website.

## **Progress on Significant Issues**

On June 4, 2001, the Project Committee issued a scheduling order for the Rio Linda/Elverta Power Project (RLEPP). It directs that the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) be filed in mid-late September 2001. In order to complete this product, the staff is working with RLEPP and agencies to resolve the project's significant issues. In the Issues Identification Report filed by staff on May 4, 2001, staff identified three issues. They were Air Quality; Visual; and Water Resources. In further project evaluation, staff has modified water resources to include biology and water (combined); and three additional project areas: Noise; Land Use; and Worker Safety and Fire Protection.

All of the issues below and the data responses will be addressed in the Data Response and Issues Workshop scheduled July 17, 2001. Below is a summary of issues that will be addressed at this upcoming workshop.

### Air Quality

The applicant's offset package (a confidential filing) is a combination of stationary and agricultural burning credits. The complicated offset package is incomplete in some quarters of the year. There is no progress to report since the Informational Hearing.

### Visual Resources

Staff had 32 data requests in this area of analysis. In the applicant's data responses, 29 of the 32 requests were either not addressed or insufficiently addressed. To date the seasonal annual cooling tower impact (SACTI) modeling information has not been received. According to the applicant, "The SACTI model will have to be revised to reflect design changes needed to implement mitigation measures. The SACTI model information will be submitted as part of a complete response to data request #65".

### Biological and Water Resources

Staff has identified this combined area as an issue due to the connection between biological and water resources. Staff, working with representatives of US Fish and Wildlife Services and California Dept. of Fish and Game, has identified potential significant adverse impacts associated with reductions in river flows caused by the project's proposed groundwater use.

The proposed project would almost double the amount of groundwater currently pumped from the basin. The reduction in flows of the American and Sacramento Rivers may affect federally and state listed fish (salmonid) species. This flow reduction occurs when pumping causes local groundwater levels to decline, which in turn causes the hydraulic gradient between the location of pumping and the rivers to increase. The increase in the gradient induces water flow from the rivers to the groundwater system.

To the extent that the flows in these two rivers are over-allocated, project use of groundwater could contribute to a significant cumulative adverse impact. The use of dry-cooling, or the use of another source for the plant's water may mitigate this potential impact.

The project previously proposed for the site in 1992 was the Sacramento Ethanol and Power Cogeneration Project, SEPCO. Conditions of certification in the SEPCO project prevented that project from using groundwater for cooling purposes.

Staff further believes that there would be adverse impacts on local groundwater quality and availability. The project as proposed could increase the rate in which the contamination plume at McClellan AFB migrates toward the communities of Rio Linda and Elverta. Staff has requested the groundwater model used by the applicant in its filing along with its input and output files. At this time staff has not received the requested information. Staff is working with Montgomery Watson, the firm which provided the groundwater modeling information referenced in the AFC. This non-peer reviewed model was discussed in some detail in Data Request Workshop. Staff's obtaining a full understanding of the workings of the groundwater model and its input/output parameters will assist in addressing the impacts of the project.

### Noise

Jim Buntin, noise contractor says that the project as proposed is designed to meet a community noise standard of 45 decibels for nighttime. In past siting cases, staff has applied a 5-decibel increase criterion. Background levels at this site are as low as 34 decibels at night. The project is likely to violate this criterion. The applicant may need to further insulate the power plant with either a sound wall, special equipment that reduces noise levels, or other sound buffers.

### Land Use

A zoning conflict exists. There is a current zoning agreement that runs with the land and the Sacramento Board of Supervisors has not rescinded it. This zoning agreement is specific in regards to the SEPCO (cogeneration) project. The proposed Rio Linda/Elverta Power Plant does not conform to the facility design dictates of that zoning agreement.

Sacramento County wrote a letter in 1994 which stated that any changes to such project would require an amendment to the zoning agreement adopted by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. This letter is inconsistent with a recent letter from Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department that states the project is consistent with the current zoning of the land.

Sacramento County planners acknowledged (in a meeting held on June 22, 2001 with Mark Hamblin and Lance Shaw) that the letters are inconsistent and that some community participants have also identified this as a potential issue. At this meeting, the county representatives indicated a willingness to pursue a consistency finding with the Board of Supervisors.

Sacramento County Planning Department has agreed to prepare a General Plan Consistency Finding Determination (using the adopted 1998 Rio Linda/Elverta Community Plan) and prepare a new Community Benefits' Package for the Rio Linda area. The Board of Supervisors could consider this possibly in August or September.

#### Worker Safety and Fire Protection

The AFC states on page 4-1 that the project will be served by the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department. Alvin Greenberg, safety contractor has serious concerns about the availability of fire protection services for the project. The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Department has informed him that it is not able to provide fire protection for the project unless the applicant provides funding to create additional infrastructure to serve the project.

#### **Schedule**

Energy Commission and Western staff are jointly reviewing this project. Staff will be alerting Western of key project milestones. A slippage in these milestones could cause a delay in the schedule. FPL Energy Sacramento Power, LLC (FPLESP) and Western have discussed relocating part of the applicant's switchyard onto an expanded Western substation. Both the applicant and Western understand that the CEC needs additional supplemental material if the applicant chooses to change the project in this manner. If this project change is not received quickly, delays could be experienced if a subsequent modification were submitted.

cc: Rio Linda/Elverta Power Project Proof of Service list